Federal Health Architecture:
Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Federal Health Architecture (FHA)?

FHA is an eGov Line of Business established in response to The President's Management Agenda calling for increased efficiency and effectiveness in government operations. FHA has responsibility for leveraging federal expertise, supporting federal activities in the development and adoption of standards, and ensuring that agencies can seamlessly exchange health data with other agencies, other governments (state, local and tribal), and with private sector healthcare organizations. FHA contributes to the President's health IT plan through:

- **Input:** A coordinated federal voice and collaboration on national health IT solutions
- **Implementation:** Guidance for implementation and adoption of endorsed standards
- **Accountability:** Ensure accountability for health IT activities in the federal space to advance interoperability

What is FHA's vision?

FHA's vision is a federal health IT environment that is interoperable with the private sector and supports the President's health IT plan enabling better care, increased efficiency, and improved population health.

Who participates in the FHA?

The FHA is a partnership among federal agencies, the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC), and the Office of Management Budget (OMB). The Department of Health & Human Services as the Managing Partner – along with the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs as Lead Partners – provide funding for the program. Additionally, nearly 20 agencies contribute time and expertise to participate in specific FHA activities such as Department of Homeland Security, Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Commerce, Department of Energy, Department of Transportation, Department of State, Social Security Administration, Department of Labor, Office of Personnel Management, Department of Justice, National Science Foundation, Department of Treasury, US Agency for International Development and Small Business Administration.

What need is FHA addressing?

FHA provides a collaborative forum for federal agencies involved in health IT activities. FHA helps to gain the federal perspective in the areas of standards harmonization, compliance certification, nationwide health information network architecture, security and privacy, and EHR adoption – in addition to other federal health IT areas. FHA provides federal input to the President's health IT plan, assists agencies in implementing new opportunities that have been identified by the American Health Information Community ("The Community"), and supports OMB to ensure accountability for health IT investments.

What are FHA's goals?

FHA has set three main goals:

- **Input:** Federal expertise and experience that supports the President's health IT plan through participation, coordination, and the leveraging of federal systems investments
- **Implementation:** The President's health IT plan is implemented in the federal agencies, in alignment with the Federal Enterprise Architecture, through adoption of

standards, certified applications and the protection of patient privacy

- **Accountability:** Federal agencies coordinate effective capital planning activities, and invest in and implement interoperable health IT

What has the FHA accomplished so far?

FHA is already acting to ensure agencies invest in and adopt standards-compliant health IT. The Consolidated Health Informatics (CHI) Initiative, a component of FHA, put forward and received endorsement from the Secretary of HHS along with DoD and VA for over 20 standards for health IT focused on medical vocabularies, messaging, EHRs and health care imaging. FHA has defined five federal health service domains: Access to Care, Population Health and Consumer Safety, Health Care Administration, Health Care Delivery Services, and Health Care Research and Practitioner Education. FHA members are developing further common processes and standards for these domains ensuring agencies have a uniform and comprehensive approach to health information exchange. FHA's Food Safety Work Group has defined better business processes to protect the nation's food supplies. Finally, FHA has coordinated federal input into the development of health IT standards and nationwide health information network (NHIN).

What are FHA's priorities for the remainder of FY2006?

FHA will continue to ensure federal input in NHIN, begin work on an Emergency Response EHR Use Case for The Community and help to simplify private sector communications processes to federal agencies. FHA is supporting OMB in surveying federal agencies to identify the current state of interoperability and major near-term opportunities. Additionally, FHA has been tasked by the Secretary of HHS to ensure that agencies have

a plan to adopt and implement standards endorsed by the Health Information Technology Standards Panel (HITSP) .

What are FHA's plans for FY2007?

The FHA will continue to identify and implement high-value, high-priority opportunities to advance federal health IT. FHA's activities will align with recommendations identified by The Community and other federal priorities such as: improving emergency care for citizens, accelerating federal health IT standardization, improving federal health IT cost-effectiveness, supporting the Nationwide Health Information Network and reducing the reporting burden for businesses.

How will FHA activities ultimately affect citizens?

The goal for effective federal use of health IT is to improve healthcare delivery for citizens. Our ability to serve those most in need during emergencies will be greatly improved if first responders and healthcare providers have access to EHRs for displaced citizens. America's military can also benefit from access to healthcare information for active service personnel and veterans. Finally, the burden on businesses by simplifying complex requirements for health-related communication with federal agencies can be reduced. Agencies will be empowered to plan for health IT investments more efficiently, exchange critical health data and contain federal costs. FHA's contributions can help strengthen federal health IT activities in support of the President's health IT plan to enable better care, increase efficiency and improve population health.